

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

- 1-22. (Canceled)
23. (Currently Amended) A method for the *in vitro* diagnosis of breast cancer, comprising determining the ~~presence~~ presence, of Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) in a biological sample obtained from a patient suspected of suffering from breast cancer, of Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) that has been secreted by breast cancer tissue;
_____ wherein the biological sample ~~is selected~~ comprises a substance selected from the group consisting of: blood, bone marrow, milk, cerebrospinal fluid and urine. ~~fluid, urine, and effusions.~~
24. (Canceled)
25. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the presence of NGF is demonstrated by direct detection of NGF in said biological sample.
26. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 25, wherein the detection of NGF is carried out by an immunoassay or by mass spectrometry.
- 27-28. (Canceled)
29. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the detection of NGF further comprises culturing NGF-sensitive cells in the presence of said biological sample.
30. (Canceled)
31. (Currently Amended) A method for the early diagnosis, screening, therapeutic ~~follow-up, prognosis and the~~ follow-up and the diagnosis of relapse in the case of breast cancer, comprising determining the presence, in a biological sample obtained from a patient

who has been treated for breast cancer, of Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) that has been secreted by breast cancer tissue;

wherein the biological sample comprises a substance selected from the group consisting of: blood, bone marrow, milk, cerebrospinal fluid, and urine.~~the method of claim 23.~~

32. (New) The method according to claim 23, wherein the biological sample comprises blood.

33. (New) The method according to claim 23, wherein the biological sample comprises urine.

34. (New) The method according to claim 23, wherein the biological sample comprises milk.

35. (New) The method according to claim 23, wherein the biological sample comprises bone marrow.

36. (New) The method according to claim 23, wherein the biological sample comprises cerebrospinal fluid.

37. (New) The method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the presence of the secreted NGF is demonstrated by indirect detection, in said biological sample, of the NGF.

38. (New) The method as claimed in claim 37, wherein the indirect detection, in the biological sample, of the NGF that has been secreted by breast cancer tissue is carried out by the use of a ligand and an anti-ligand, wherein the ligand binds to the NGF.

39. (New) The method according to claim 23, wherein the biological sample does not contain breast cancer cells.